

of Christ have been diligent in care of their sanctuary.

While the congregation takes pride in their sanctuary and other buildings, it is not the property, but the worship and all the activities of the congregation that are the heart of the church. This anniversary is the celebration of 150 years of steadfast worship where there have been 2,189 Baptisms, 1,640 Confirmations, 690 Marriages and 1,514 Funerals recorded since 1860.

Descendents of families who first organized the church are among those who continue to welcome new members to worship. Together all the members of the Salem United Church of Christ honor the past as well as look to the future of their church.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. ARMY SPC. 1ST
CLASS DAMON SHONTELL

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 2010

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, I rise in solemn tribute to the memory of a patriotic young man from South Alabama who recently passed away while honorably serving our Nation.

On July 5, 2010, U.S. Army Spc. 1st Class Damon Shontell, age 22 of Grand Bay, Alabama, died at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

A graduate of Alma Bryant High School in Irvington, Alabama, Spc. Shontell joined the Army after receiving his diploma. He was known for his deep and abiding patriotism and his determination to serve his country. He planned to pursue a degree in engineering upon completion of his military service.

After entering the Army, Damon attended Military Police Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri in June 2006. After completion of his training, he was transferred to Fort Hood, Texas, where he was stationed with the 64th Military Police Company. In May 2007, Spc. Shontell deployed with the 64th MP Company to Iraq where he bravely defended his comrades in gun battles with the enemy. In July 2008, he returned to Fort Hood for another 12 months before transferring to the 17th Military Police Detachment at Fort Jackson in July 2009. He continued to serve at Fort Jackson as a Military Policeman, and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal (1 OLC), Army Achievement Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and the Iraq Campaign Medal.

He was a devoted soldier who witnessed the hardship and sacrifice of war, but he never faltered in his dedication to duty.

Madam Speaker, we owe so much to those who wear the uniform of our country and put themselves in harm's way to ensure our safety and security.

Even more than the loss of a hero, there is no greater loss than the loss of a child. Spc. Damon Shontell's father, David, personally wrote me a touching letter about the tremendous void that has been created in his life through the passing of his only child, who was also his best friend.

Mr. Shontell also asked me to express his gratitude to those personnel at Fort Jackson who treated him with "love, respect, trust and

brotherhood" and who so honored his son. In keeping with his request, I bring to the attention of the U.S. House those officers who deserve special recognition for their compassion: Sgt. Terry Horn, Sgt. Kevin Lasonde, Sgt. William Crews, Sgt. David Beaton, Sgt. Stacy Case, Cpt. Tara Mahoney, Col. James Love, Sgt. Ken Lucas; and, at Fort Rucker, Alabama, Sgt. Michelle Flores.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the people of Alabama, I wish to extend my heartfelt condolences to Spc. 1st Class Shontell's father, David, and his family and friends for their profound personal loss. We all mourn the passing of this very special young man who was taken away from all of us in the prime of his youth. Damon Shontell loved his father, his country, and his God. He will never be forgotten. May he rest in peace.

FAIR SENTENCING ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 28, 2010

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1789, the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010. For too long, crack cocaine users, predominantly minorities, have been subject to excessive penalties when compared to users of powder cocaine even though both drugs are chemically identical. While this bill does not go far enough towards righting this injustice, it is a tremendous step in the right direction, and I commend Senator DURBIN and the rest of the Senate for passing this long overdue piece of legislation and urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, for too long users of crack cocaine were sentenced to prison terms that were much longer than prison terms for users of cocaine, a chemically identical drug. We all know why this is the case. In the 1980's, the United States was in the midst of a crack cocaine epidemic. While cocaine was often considered a harmless, even glamorous, "recreational" drug of privilege, crack cocaine was considered a more harmful drug and was associated with crime and destitution. The reality is that crack cocaine, though chemically identical to cocaine, is less pure and therefore sells for less on the street. As a result, this drug rapidly spread across already impoverished and crime-ridden areas of the country, in many cases making a bad situation worse. As we all know, low income Americans are disproportionately minority. Crack cocaine quickly became associated with minorities, particularly African Americans. It would be more accurate, however, to associate crack cocaine use with poverty than with African Americans. It is important to let the American people know that, at the height of the crack cocaine epidemic in this country, a 1982 the National Survey on Drug Abuse found that 22 million Americans had used cocaine at one time or another. I say this to make it clear that cocaine was as much of an epidemic as crack cocaine during the 1980s. The only difference between crack and cocaine is the user.

In response to the crack cocaine epidemic, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 in a reactionary effort to try and put a stop to the use of crack cocaine. The law was

a part of the so called "war on drugs," a popular political catch phrase at the time. This "war" was launched by stressing the serious social harms of violent crime, theft, social exclusion; with which crack cocaine use was associated.

Current law provides that a person convicted of crack cocaine possession receives the same mandatory prison term as someone who possesses 100 times the same amount of powder cocaine and the law has mandatory minimums for simple possession. Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 sets the penalty for possession of crack cocaine at 100 times the penalty for a chemically identical drug, cocaine and sets mandatory minimum sentences for crack cocaine users while setting a mandatory minimum sentence for cocaine users. As a result of this law, wealthy users of cocaine have received more lenient penalties than poor minority users of crack, a chemically identical drug. According to U.S. government statistics, 82 percent of Federal crack cocaine offenders are African American and only 9 percent are white. African-Americans and Latinos were incarcerated at a higher rate because of their drug use preference. In this country, where everyone is born equal, it is absolutely outrageous that the law could be so slanted. It simply makes no sense. As a former Magistrate Judge and defense attorney, I firmly believe that there should be no difference in the ratio of sentencing for crack cocaine and powder cocaine possession.

Over the years, there have been numerous efforts to lower this ratio to a more reasonable difference in sentencing for crack cocaine and powder cocaine. In 2007, The United States Sentencing Commission voted to recommend that this disparity be rectified and existing sentences reduced. Also in 2007, The Supreme Court ruled in *Kimbrough v. United States* that the guidelines for cocaine are advisory only, and that a judge may consider the disparity between the guidelines' treatment of crack and powder cocaine offenses when sentencing a defendant. Finally, today, the United States House of Representatives will consider and hopefully pass a bill that will lower the ratio of sentencing from 100 to 1, to a new ratio of 18 to 1. Mr. Speaker, I support this bill but 18 to 1 is still unnecessary and discriminatory. An 18 to 1 ratio still preserves and institutional disparity between drug sentences of wealthy cocaine users and predominantly poor and African American crack cocaine users.

I support the direction that this bill takes the country however I am disappointed that, after all these years, an institutional disparity will be preserved. I firmly believe that there should be no disparity in the ratio of sentencing between users of crack cocaine and powder cocaine. The ratio should be one to one. This view is shared by both Republicans and Democrats alike. Former D.C. prosecutor, later D.C. Superior Court judge, and present D.C. Federal judge, Judge Reggie B. Walton, a Republican nominated by former President George W. Bush, supports an equalization of the sentencing disparity. Even President Obama stated in 2008 that the sentencing disparity "has disproportionately filled our prisons with young black and Latino drug users." He cited figures that African Americans serve almost as much time for drug offenses, at 58.7 months, as whites do for violent offenses, at 61.7 months. Finally, in early 2009, Attorney General Holder